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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /070 W
----------040123 010313Z /14
R 310800Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 637
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5367

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT BG
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ZIA TO ANNOUNCE FORMATION OF NEW PARTY

REFS: A. DACCA 4341; B. DACCA 5080

1. SEVERAL WELL-INFORMED SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT PRESI-
DENT ZIA WILL ANNOUNCE THE FORMATION OF A NEW
PARTY TO BE CALLED THE BANGLADESH JATIYATABADI (NATIONALIST)
PARTY ON SEPTEMBER 1. IT IS WIDELY ASSUMED THAT THE NEW
PARTY WILL BE COMPOSED OF THE PARTIES WHICH MADE UP THE
PRESIDENT'S JATIYATABADI FRONT DURING THE JUNE 3 PRESIDENT-
IAL ELECTION. HOWEVER, THE ONLY ANNOUNCED ADHERENT TO
THE NEW PARTY IS JAGODAL. MOST OF THE OTHER PARTIES IN THE
JATIYATABADI FRONT HAVE RESERVED COMMENT THUS FAR, THOUGH
SEVERAL MINISTERS WHO ARE PARTY LEADERS (MOST NOTABLY
SENIOR MINISTER MASHIUR RAHMAN) WOULD LIKELY GAIN FROM
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A MERGER OF THE JATIYATABADI FRONT'S ELEMENTS AND CAN
BE EXPECTED TO BRING THEIR PARTIES INTO THE FOLD (REF A).

2. BESIDES THE JAGODAL STATEMENT, THE ONLY OTHER
PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED MERGER HAS COME
FROM EDUCATION MINISTER KAZI ZAFAR AHMED, GENERAL
SECRETARY OF THE UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY (UPP). KAZI HAS

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SAID THE UPP SUPPORTS CONTINUATION OF THE JF BUT THAT MERGING THE "DIVERSE CURRENTS" OF THE FRONT INTO A SINGLE PARTY DOES NOT LOOK TO BE A "VIABLE PROPOSITION". HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE UPP WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE JF MANIFESTO AND THE PRESIDENT'S 19- POINT PROGRAM. THERE IS SOME QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE IS SPEAKING FOR ALL ELEMENTS OF THE UPP, AS PARTY PRESIDENT ABDUL HALIM CHOUDHURY IS SAID TO FAVOR THE PROPOSED MERGER.

3. THE DATE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION HAS STILL NOT BEEN SET. ELECTIONS SECRETARY QAZI JALALUDDIN AHMED TOLD DCM AUGUST 30 THAT HE BELIEVES ELECTIONS WILL BE NOT LATER HAN DECEMBER 15, AND SAID THAT, AS FAR AS THE ELECTION MACHINERY WAS CONCERNED, THEY COULD BE SOONER. HE SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN DELIBERATING ON POSSIBLE ELECTION DATES FOR SOME TIME BUT THAT HE (THE PRESIDENT) WOULD PROBABLY ACT QUICKLY WHEN HE DOES ACT. JALAL SOME TIME AGO STRONGLY RECOMMENDED AGAINST (REF B) AND DOES NOT NOW EXPECT A NEW DELIMITATION OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES, A PROCESS WHICH WOULD LIKELY DELAY ELECTIONS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY ORGANIZATION, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DACCA05367
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780356-1137
Format: TEL
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978085/aaaaadob.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: daef6f61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 DACCA 4341, 78 DACCA 5080
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1697548
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT ZIA TO ANNOUNCE FORMATION OF NEW PARTY
TAGS: PINT, BG, (RAHMAN, ZIAUR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/daef6f61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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